

Policy and Program Brief

U. S. Department of Education
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Improving Teacher Quality In U.S. School Districts: Districts' Use of Title II, Part A, Funds in 2002-2003

Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, places a major emphasis on teacher quality as a significant factor in improving student achievement. Under NCLB, Title II, Part A provides funds to states and districts to conduct a variety of teacher-related reform activities.¹ Unlike previous authorizations of Title II, which provided funds primarily for professional development in mathematics and science, under NCLB funds can be used for a variety of teacher quality activities in any subject area. In 2002-2003, Title II, Part A provided states and districts approximately \$2.85 billion for teacher quality reforms. For school districts, which receive the majority of these funds (95 percent or about \$2.7 billion), allowable uses of funds include:

- Recruiting highly qualified teachers.
- Providing financial incentives for teachers in high-need areas.
- Offering professional development in core academic areas.
- Retaining teachers through mentoring, induction and other support services.
- Reforming tenure.
- Providing merit pay to teachers.
- Testing teachers in academic areas.
- Carrying out programs that emphasize multiple career paths for teachers.
- Reducing class size.

¹ Title II, Part A program replaced two existing programs within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education: the Eisenhower Professional Development and the Class-Size Reduction programs. Eisenhower program activities focused mostly on professional development in mathematics and science. The Class-Size Reduction program was primarily designed to reduce the class size of students in grades K through 3.